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RP024

Impact of International Non-Governmental Organisations (Ingos) on Youth Development in Yobe State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The ongoing crises in North-East region of Nigeria attracted many international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) to come into the country with different forms of assistance ranging from emergency support to development based interventions for the benefit of people living in the region. These assistances are directly or indirectly affecting the lives of all categories of people living in the region. It is against this backdrop that this study assessed the impact of INGOs on youth development in Yobe State, Nigeria; with specific emphasis on social, economic and political spheres among youths. The study was survey research that utilised virtual structured questionnaires to generate information from respondents. Convenience sampling technique was utilised in generating 394 responses. The study revealed that INGOs certainly impacted on the lives of youths, especially in the areas of employment and skill acquisition opportunities, education, healthcare and youthful female empowerment. The study recommended that governments create enabling environment for INGOs to operate with very close monitoring of their operations, and ensure that indigenous populations are largely employed by the organisations.

Keywords: Non-Governmental Organisation, Youth Development, Empowerment Background

1. INTRODUCTION

Globally, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) have responded to crises depending on the needs and nature of insecurity. These organisations, mostly with humanitarian nature spend huge amount of money generated from donor agencies, international organisations and philanthropists for the benefit of poor and victims of crises. These responses complement the effort of governments in alleviating the pains and discomfort of poor, vulnerable, displaced and refugee persons.

Since July 2009 when Boko Haram group first launched attack on Maiduguri, capital city of Borno State, many bombings, gunshots and murders were committed by the group in Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Abuja, Gombe, Bauchi, Kano and Kaduna states. Yobe State shares a border with Borno State, and they are the most hit states by Boko Haram atrocities, in addition to Adamawa State acronym as BAY States. Similar to Borno, Yobe was equally first attacked in July 2009. Yobe recorded its first attack on Police Station in Potiskum in July 2009, followed by another attack in November 2011 with gunshots that killed over 150 persons (Dauda, 2014).

Since then, there has been incessant attacks in the state and its environs on regular and occasional basis which renders many people homeless and led to loss of livelihood sources, displacement and deaths. These attracted INGOs to come in with various forms of support to the victims of the crises from emergency humanitarian relief, to empowerment programmes that are capable of sustaining the vulnerable persons. The support includes poor and needy individuals and communities that are affected, and even strengthening of governmental institutions themselves. Youths, like all other categories of people directly and indirectly benefitted from these interventions which comes in the form of funding of development initiatives; provision, renovation and reconstruction of institutions; training and capacity building programmes; and other forms of empowerment including income generating activities.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to assess the impact of INGOs on youth development in Yobe State, Nigeria. Specifically, it assessed the impact of INGOs on:

- i. social development;
- ii. economic development; and
- iii. political development.

Firstly, social development was measured through improvement in education and healthcare, empowerment of women of youth age and persons with disabilities, and inspiration for youths to take developmental actions in their communities. Secondly, economic development was measured through the availability of skill acquisition and employment opportunities, relief support, funding of youth based projects, and monetary support like loans or capital. Lastly, political development was measured through improvements in democratic governing skills, transparency and accountability for good governance, exposure around elections and electoral processes, participation in decision making and knowledge of public policy with emphasis on pursuance of bills and budget scrutiny.

1.2 Scope and Methodology

The study is limited to young persons between the ages of 18 and 35 years, who are residents of Yobe State. It was a descriptive survey research that utilised structured questionnaires administered online to generate data from respondents. Convenience sampling technique was utilised in generating responses from 394 respondents on a random basis.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Generally, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are prestigious actors in international development that provide services to vulnerable persons and communities, and serve as policy advocates. They seemed to be known best for the delivery of basic services to the vulnerable people and organise policy advocacy and public campaigns for change. NGOs are working on extensive roles including emergency response, policy advocacy, human rights, democratic building, research and information provision, conflict resolution and environmental activism (Lewis & Kanji, 2009). International non-governmental organisations (INGOs), however, are non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with international scope. They are not-for-profit establishments that receive funding from

companies, membership fees, philanthropists, international organisations or intergovernmental organisations. They function independent of governments, mostly as humanitarian related establishments that are essential in promoting social progress, human rights and economic growth. They provide assistance across the world and support civil society groups.



Fig. 1: Map of Nigeria showing 36 states of the country, Yobe State inclusive



Fig 2: Map of Yobe, showing its 17 Local Government Areas

In African tradition, strategic placement of youths in economic, social and political transformation of the society is well recognised. The youth constitute the major labour force which food security and availability is guaranteed in communities. They formed the centre piece of all active organisations and movements, propelling force of support to industries which raised the status of many countries, therefore tailoring development to

focus on youth is an important idea (Gambone, 2002; as cited in Yusuf & Mechanic, 2014). The key areas of youth development according to Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE) are education, health, civic and political participation (Mangala & Nari, 2017). This development is about enhancing the status of youth population and empowering them to build their competencies and capabilities for life. This will enable them contribute to economically viable, legally supportive and politically stable environment.

NGOs are increasingly significant in youth development as they provide employment opportunities, vocational skill opportunities (Fischer & Fischer, 2004), humanitarian relief, policy formulation and advocacy training, income generation means (Attack, 1999; Hassan, 2003; as cited in Madu & Muhingi, 2017), women empowerment opportunities (Division for the Advancement of Women [DAW], 2004), healthcare development and promotion (Abdullahi, Cheri & Chikaji, 2017), volunteer work such as participating in cultural programmes, education programmes, awareness creation and campaigns on issues of concern (Al-Ani, et al., 2006). NGOs provides platforms for youth well-being and resilience. Through relating with these organisations, youths learn the art of mood management, self-awareness, empathy, self-motivation and handling relationships (including social competence). Youths learn critical thinking skills, creativity and problem solving techniques. It further promotes youth attitude toward policy making, civic and political engagements such as the understanding of governance systems and processes including voicing their views, politics, campaigns and protests (Holtom, et al., 2006).

Additionally, youths are not only empowered by NGOs. They also set up youth led organisations to collectively address issues of concern such as advocating for good governance, ensuring transparency and accountability in governmental systems, volunteering in community transformation and serving as voice of the voiceless. With the coming of INGOs, these efforts increased in greater magnitude with many youth organisations coming into existence. Youths capacity has enhanced, networks expands, opportunities increased, and in the process, they earn social status, recognition and prestige.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Social development

S/N	Statement	SA	A	UD	D	SD	Total
1.	INGOs provide improved education opportunities and support for youths	123 (31%)	149 (38%)	16 (04%)	63 (16%)	43 (11%)	394 (100%)
2.	Healthcare services have improved with focus on youth population with the coming of INGOs	103 (26%)	111 (28%)	28 (07%)	102 (26%)	50 (13%)	394 (100%)
3.	Women of youth age have been empowered by INGOs	120 (30%)	109 (28%)	04 (01%)	102 (26%)	59 (15%)	394 (100%)

4.	Persons living with disabilities (PWDs) have been empowered through the engagements of INGOs	89 (22%)	55 (14%)	57 (15%)	94 (23%)	99 (25%)	394 (100%)
5.	The presence of INGOs have inspired youths to take developmental actions in their communities	113 (29%)	152 (39%)	11 (03%)	80 (20%)	38 (09%)	394 (100%)

Source: Survey (2020)

Data in Table 1 shows that INGOs provided improved education opportunities and support for youths in Yobe State. This is indicated by 31% strongly agreed and 38% agreed. The disagreement was only represented by 16% and 11% strongly disagreed. The remaining 4% were neutral. This is in line with Al-Ani, et al. (2006)'s findings that among the critical aspects that youths got empowered with the operations of NGOs, are different education programmes. In a similar vein, youths benefitted from healthcare services provided and supported by INGOs in Yobe State. A total of 26% of respondents strongly agreed and 28% agreed. Only 7% were neutral, 13% strongly disagreed and 26% disagreed. These coincide with the observation of Mangala and Nari (2017) that the key areas of youth development according to Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE) include education and healthcare. Similarly, Abdullahi, Cheri & Chikaji (2017) and Attack (1999) as cited in Madu and Muhingi (2017) also noted that humanitarian relief such as healthcare are crucial in youth development and NGOs empower youths around this area.

Interestingly, women of youth age have also been empowered with the operations of INGOs. The level of agreement here is cumulated as 30% strongly agreed and 28% agreed. However, a total of 26% disagreed, 15% strongly disagreed and 1% neutral. This is in consensus with the postulation of Division for the Advancement of Women [DAW] (2004) who recommended for the empowerment in the attainment of gender equality in development. By empowering young women, they are given the capacity to contribute in nation-building. There was high level of disagreement in the notion that INGOs have empowered persons living with disabilities (PWDs). This is indicated by 25% strongly disagreed and 23% disagreed. While the agreement levels were 22% and 14% respectively. The remaining 15% were neutral. This conflicts with Lewis & Kanji (2009) opinion that NGOs empower vulnerable persons and fight for human rights. The result indicated that it is not obtainable in Yobe State.

However, the presence of INGOs in Yobe State has significantly inspired youths to take developmental actions in their communities as indicated by 29% agreed and 39% strongly agreed. while only 3% were undecided, the remaining respondents disagreed (20%) and strongly disagreed (9%). NGOs train and expose youths to do volunteer work such as participating in awareness creation and campaigns on issues of concern in their communities (Attack, 1999; Hassan, 2003; as cited in Madu & Muhingi, 2017; Al-Ani, et al. (2006). This promotes sustainable development.

Table 2: Economic Development

S/N	Statement	SA	A	UD	D	SD	Total
1.	Skill acquisition opportunities for youths have increased with the coming of INGOs	107 (27%)	136 (35%)	08 (04%)	70 (17%)	73 (19%)	394 (100%)
2.	The presence of INGOs serves as employment opportunity for youth population	121 (31%)	103 (26%)	19 (05%)	87 (22%)	64 (16%)	394 (100%)
3.	Youth receives relief support from INGOs	15 (04%)	124 (32%)	37 (09%)	116 (29%)	102 (26%)	394 (100%)
4.	INGOs provides funding for youth based projects or programmes	78 (20%)	133 (34%)	19 (05%)	89 (22%)	75 (19%)	394 (100%)
5.	Youth receive monetary support, capital or loans from INGOs	21 (05%)	117 (30%)	20 (05%)	188 (48%)	50 (12%)	394 (100%)

Source: Survey (2020)

Table 2 presents the economic development indicators and its relationship with youth development as a result of the operations of INGOs in Yobe State. The table revealed that skill acquisition opportunities for youths have increased with the coming of INGOs. This is the decision of 27% and 35% of the respondents who strongly agreed and agreed respectively. Nonetheless, 17% disagreed, 19% even strongly disagreed and 4% were neutral. In the same vein, 26% and 31% agreed and strongly agreed respectively, to the notion that the existence of INGOs serves as employment opportunity for youth population in Yobe State. Though 22% disagreed and another 16% even strongly disagreed, and the remaining 5% were undecided. These findings coincide with those of Attack (1999), Hassan (2003) as cited in Madu and Muhingi (2017) and Fischer and Fischer (2004) that NGOs provide employment opportunities, vocational skill opportunities income generation means for youths towards ensuring their economic development, and by extension sustainable community development.

On the belief that INGOs provide relief support to youth population in Yobe State, 29% of the respondents disagreed and another 26% strongly disagreed. The agreement levels were 4% strongly agreed and 32% agreed. Then, 9% were neutral about the idea. Similarly, youths do not receive any meaningful monetary support as capital or loans from INGOs as revealed by 48% of the respondents disagreed and another 12% even strongly disagreed. The few that agreed were 30% and another 5% strongly agreed. The remaining 5% were non-aligned.

Although this finding contradicts those of Lewis and Kanji (2009), Hassan (2003) as cited in Madu and Muhingi (2017) and Holtom et al. (2006), it is perhaps because this study is specific on 'youths'. Ordinarily, NGOs have contributed with both relief support, vocational skills and start-up capital in Yobe State as pointed in Better Assistance in Crises Report by Sterk & Issaka (2019). However, the beneficiaries may not be majorly youth specific. Nonetheless, the respondents strongly agreed (20%) and agreed (34%) that INGOs provide funding for youth based projects and programmes. Even though, this

is also contested by 22% disagreed and 19% strongly disagreed. The 5% that remained were undecided.

Table 3: Political Development

S/N	Statement	SA	A	UD	D	SD	Total
1.	Youths learn the art of democratic governance with the presence of INGOs	96 (24%)	99 (25%)	31 (08%)	89 (23%)	79 (20%)	394 (100%)
2.	The presence of INGOs has empowered youths on transparency and accountability for good governance	122 (31%)	101 (26%)	09 (02%)	100 (25%)	62 (16%)	394 (100%)
3.	INGOs presence has improved youths understanding of their role in decision making processes of the government	93 (24%)	130 (33%)	08 (02)	93 (24%)	70 (17%)	394 (100%)
4.	Youths understanding of elections, electoral processes and advocacy on election have improved with the presence of INGOs	84 (21%)	82 (20%)	11 (03%)	143 (37%)	74 (19%)	394 (100%)
5.	With the coming of INGOs, youths have been empowered with skills and knowledge of public policy such as pursuance of bills and budget scrutiny	113 (29%)	94 (24%)	29 (07%)	74 (19%)	84 (21%)	394 (100%)

Source: Survey (2020)

On the notion that youths learned the art of democratic governance with the presence of INGOs in Table 3, the responses revealed a slightly similar result as the agreement level is almost the same with the disagreement. While 25% and 24% agreed and strongly agreed respectively, 23% and 20% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Yet, additional 8% of the respondents were neutral. However, when asked about the relevance of INGOs in empowering youths on transparency and accountability for good governance, 26% and 31% agreed and strongly agreed respectively. The disagreed, strongly disagreed and neutral responses were 25%, 16% and 2% respectively.

The presence of INGOs has further increased youths understanding of their role in decision making processes of the government. This is indicated by 33% agreed and 24% even strongly agreed. The level of contest was 24% disagreed and 17% strongly disagreed. Only 3% were non-aligned. However, it was believed that the operations of

INGOs did not foster youth understanding of elections, electoral processes and advocacy as indicated by 37% and 19% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Only 3% were undecided, 21% agreed and 20% strongly agreed. With the coming of INGOs, 29% (strongly agreed) and 24% (agreed) of the respondents believed that youths have been empowered with skills and knowledge of public policy such as pursuance of bills and budget scrutiny due to the presence of INGOs in the state. Nonetheless, 21% strongly disagreed, 19% disagreed and 7% were neutral.

The political development of youths through the efforts of NGOs has been acknowledged by a number of studies. The findings in this paper coincide with those of Lewis & Kanji (2009) who realised that NGOs empower youths around policy advocacy and democratic building; Holtom, et al. (2006) discovered the relationship between NGOs and youth understanding of governance systems and processes including voicing their views, politics, campaigns and protests; and Mangala and Nari (2017) observed that civic participation are among the key areas of youth development according to Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE).

4. CONCLUSION

The study concluded that INGOs have significantly enhanced the lives of youth on the data obtained from the 394 respondents across Yobe State. Specifically, youths have been empowered on education, healthcare, skill acquisition opportunities, employment chances and funding of youth-based programmes, which have been critical as governments could not adequately ensure them. In addition, individual youths and civil society organisations have been inspired and empowered to take improved and advanced actions towards changing the society, especially around democracy and good governance.

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